ALGLALA

AN AMERICAN OPERA IN ENGLISH

Prologue and Two Scenes

Music by

FRANCESCO B. DE LEONE

Text by

CECIL FANNING

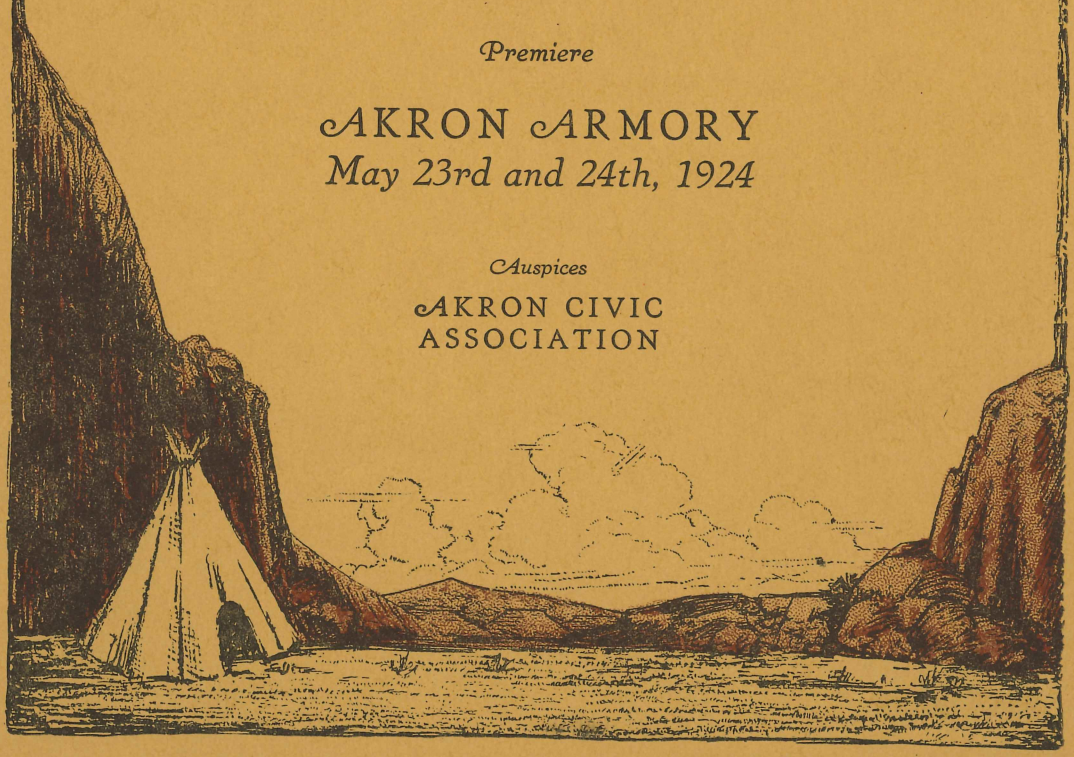
Premiere

AKRON ARMORY

May 23rd and 24th, 1924

Auspices

AKRON CIVIC ASSOCIATION



Synopsis of the Opera

THE opera *Alglala* is based on an Indian theme of the brave days of '49, for the atmosphere of which Cecil Fanning, the librettist, has drawn from experiences encountered during several seasons spent on the Crow Reservation in Montana. The title, which is also the name of the Indian heroine, means in Iroquois "Little-Good-for-Nothing," an appellation given her at birth by her father because of his disappointment at the sex of his offspring. The principal characters, of whom there are only four, consist of Alglala (soprano), her father (basso cantante), an Indian brave (baritone), and a white man (tenor). The settings reproduce the mesa land and painted desert of Arizona with a Chippewa tepee in the foreground—perhaps the most characteristic native American setting. The same scenery is used throughout, but with changing lighting effects to indicate the soft shades of twilight, the beauty of a moonlit night, and the spreading colors of dawn on the desert.

The curtain rises on the old chieftain sitting before his tepee at twilight, wrapped in a white mourning blanket, and bewailing the death of his squaw and the gradual passing away of his race. His beautiful daughter, Alglala, too full of the life and romance of youth, is rebellious against the continued atmosphere of gloom under which she is compelled to live, and in this mood is folded into his blanket by a young Indian brave who has long wooed her and who forces her into this embrace signifying betrothal. The dramatic action begins when a white stranger, hunted by a posse on a false charge of murder, straggles into camp, haggard, parched with thirst, and nearly dead from starvation.

With irresistible fatality, the white man and the Indian maid are drawn together, and in passages of lyric emotion they tell each other of their great love. The Indian lover appears on the scene and there is a death-grapple between the two rivals. Alglala, seeing her white sweetheart weakening, delivers the *coup de grâce,* and over the dead body of the fallen Indian brave dances a weird, haunting dance of death. The two lovers, after mutual vows of everlasting fidelity, depart in haste, hoping to escape the father's vengeance. But he speedily returns with a small band of warriors, whom he dispatches in pursuit of the fugitives with the stern command, "Kill both!" The curtain goes down on the same fireside scene as at the opening, with the old chieftain sitting alone, huddled before his tepee, and chanting a mourning song. The action is divided into two parts, with an orchestral interlude.

Program

PRINCIPALS

MISS MABEL GARRISON
Soprano

MR. EDWARD JOHNSON
Tenor

MR. CECIL FANNING
Baritone

MR. FRANCIS SADLIER
Basso

SATURDAY AFTERNOON PERFORMANCE

MISS JANET WATTS
Soprano

MR. HOWARD JUSTICE
Tenor

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SOPRANO: Alglala (Little-Good-for-Nothing).

BASS: Namegos (The Trout), a Chippewa, father of Alglala.

BARITONE: Ozawa-animiki (Yellow Thunder), a young brave.

TENOR: Ralph, a white man.

The scene is laid in Arizona.

Time, about the year 1850.

NOTE: All the Indian words used by Namegos are Chippewa. Those used by Alglala are Iroquois.

CHORUS

Characters in the Prologue

The Chief ..... JOHN PARNALL

Braves—Gustave Johnson, George Tongring, J. Rex Maltbie, Ray Shambs, Bert Lange, Richard Heiniger, Fred Williams.

Squaws—Aline Beshinska, Julia Schaffer, Jennie Harris, Bertha L. Weir, Edith Beutel, Jessie Miller, Edna Hess, Josephine Milavec.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Prologue—The council fire and invocation to the Great Spirit.

Act I—The tepee of Namegos; a lonely spot in the painted desert of Arizona. The scene opens at twilight and closes at moonlight.

Act II—The same scene on the following morning.

EXECUTIVE STAFF

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FRANCIS SADLIER, General Director
CARL GROSSMAN, Conductor and Musical Director
CARL M. HAAGEN, Stage Director

Painting from which scenery was made, courtesy of FERDINAND BURGDORFF

SHECK STUDIO, Scenic Artists
L. J. CALLINAN, Publicity Director
EMIL D'ZOMBA, Technical Director
THOMAS PARKER, Stage Carpenter

Performances given by special arrangement with the publishers, G. Schirmer, Inc., N. Y.

Pianos used by artists courtesy of Smith & Mitten Piano Co.

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